Strengthening professionals: a chapter-level formative evaluation of the Medical Library Association mentoring initiative*†

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Objective: The main objective was to determine to what extent the Medical Library Association (MLA) mentoring initiative was implemented in the South Central Chapter of the Medical Library Association (SCC/MLA) and to identify the needs, improvements, and adjustments in mentoring services for the future to improve the practice of librarianship.

Methods: The data were collected by administering an anonymous structured survey designed by the authors. The survey was mailed to all 335 chapter members. The authors elicited responses to determine the chapter members' mentoring needs, awareness of available resources, satisfaction with existing services and resources, needs for the future, and suggestions to meet those needs.

Discussion: Of the 335 delivered surveys, 184 were returned, yielding a return rate of 55%. Eighty percent had a mentor or mentors in their careers, and 74% were either very satisfied or satisfied with the relationship. The majority considered having a mentor a critical part of the professional experience. The mentoring activity chosen by respondents as the most important was improvement of job performance through skills development. Over 50% were aware of SCC/MLA's mentoring activities, and less than 50% were aware of MLA's mentoring Website.

Conclusions: The rate of response and the wealth of comments provided by respondents document the high level of interest in mentoring by medical librarians in the region. The following mentoring services were equally important to SCC/MLA members and were recommended for improvement or development at the regional level: a formalized mentoring program in the region, Web-based mentoring resources on the SCC/MLA Website, and a continuing education course for mentors. Members are aware of mentoring activities in the region; however, participation levels need to be increased in activities that SCC/MLA and MLA provide. Mentoring continues to evolve as a service in the profession.

Mentoring has always been an integral component of the library profession. It means something slightly dif-

ferent to each individual. The professional literature describes and discusses a variety of mentoring definitions and concepts as well. An article by Kuyper-Rushing [1] and another by Wittkopf [2] discuss the development, implementation, and benefits of a formal mentoring program at the Louisiana State University Libraries. The program has been designed to help librarians meet the university's tenure and promotion expectations. Law supports a formalized one-to-one mentoring model in her article. She states that ''while

personal connection was very important in the success of the relationship, the formalized approach resulted in the development of relationships that would not have happened easily otherwise'' [3]. Keyse addresses informal mentorship settings as a valuable model and one that is ''more likely to encourage bonding between members'' [4]. In his article, Ferriero discusses mentors' characteristics and includes a lengthy appendix of those traits [5]. Tenner reflects on the pitfalls of academic mentorship, stating that ''the current trend toward over evaluating mentors is understandable but mistaken. We need to recognize not only successful protégés but also others who have succeeded without mentors'' [6]. Fuller emphasizes the relationship and the role a mentor can play ''in assisting those who would like to contribute to a research study'' in medical librarianship [7].

For the project discussed in this paper, the authors chose two definitions, one from Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and one from the Medical Library Association (MLA) Research Section's Website <http://research.mlanet.org/mentor.html>, as cited in Shea's book on mentoring.

Mentors: ''senior professionals who provide guidance, direction, and support to those persons desirous of improvement in academic positions, administrative positions, or other career development situations.'' [8]

Mentoring: ''a developmental, caring, sharing, and helping relationship where one person invests time, know-how, and effort in enhancing another person's growth, knowledge, and skills, and responds to critical needs in the library of the person in ways that prepare the individual for greater productivity or achievement in the future.'' [9]

In 1999, the MLA Board of Directors appointed a task force to define and develop a unified, comprehensive concept of mentoring in MLA. The task force existed from 1999 to 2001. In 2003, MLA's mentoring initiative culminated in the MLA Mentoring Website <http://www.mlanet.org/mentor/> and the mentoring plenary session at MLA '03 in San Diego <http://www.mlanet.org/am/am2003/program/speakers.html#4>. Additional mentoring efforts were organized by MLA through its Chapter Council. In October 2002, MLA Chapter Council posted a list of the mentoring programs available through each chapter <http://www.chaptercouncil.mlanet.org/projects/mentoring2002.html>.

PURPOSE

In the winter of 2004, the authors began a study to determine to what extent the MLA mentoring initiative was implemented in the South Central Chapter of the Medical Library Association (SCC/MLA), which includes the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The purpose of the research was to identify needs, improvements, and adjustments in mentoring services for the future to enhance the practice of librarianship. This effort was sponsored in part by a South Central Academic Medical Libraries (SCAMeL) Research Grant.

METHODOLOGY

Survey instrument

For the study, the authors designed an anonymous structured survey (Appendix A). The instrument was tested by a group of medical librarians who were not current SCC/MLA members. Feedback was provided and appropriate changes made. In January 2004, the survey was mailed to all members of SCC/MLA of the previous year. A follow-up survey was sent in February 2004. The majority of questions employed interval levels of measurement using a Likert response scale. Some questions were dichotomous; others were multiple choice; and a few were open ended. To improve the quality of results, a variety of question formats were used in each section. Where appropriate, the authors provided some of the most obvious choices, and respondents could select as many as suitable.

The survey consisted of three pages divided into four sections. Section I asked general questions about mentoring, respondents' experience with mentoring, characteristics of formal mentoring programs, and mentoring relationships. Section II dealt with awareness of and participation in mentoring services at institutional or organizational, regional, and national association levels. Section III asked demographic questions about the respondents. Section IV gave the respondents the opportunity to provide additional comments. The survey required approximately fifteen minutes to complete. It was accompanied by a self-addressed envelope and a cover letter. The letter explained the project and incorporated the necessary elements to comply with Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements. University IRB approval was needed to assure confidentiality for the respondents.

In addition to mailing the survey to members, the authors used the chapter email discussion list to announce the study and to send reminders about deadlines for responding. To encourage participation, the authors promised to send a flyer summarizing the results of the study to all who were SCC/MLA members in 2003. All surveys were also accompanied by a unique paperclip, which became the project trademark through follow-up mailings and presentations.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Response rate

Surveys were delivered to all 335 members of SCC/MLA during 2003. The overall response rate for the survey was 55% with 184 completed surveys returned, 137 from the first mailing and 47 from the second.

The largest number of respondents was from Texas, followed by the group from Louisiana (Figure 1). This distribution mirrored the breakdown of SCC/MLA membership in the region. The group with more than 20 years of experience was the largest, with 46% of the respondents falling in that category. Twice as many

Figure 1
Demographics of respondents

Years of experience

1 – 5	20
6 – 10	26
11 –15	34
16 – 20	18
0ver 20	86

n = 184

Other	6
No answer	2

NM 9 · OK 18 · AR 10 · LA 41 · TX 98

Type of department

Public services	111
Technical services	59
Library administration	69
Other	12
Does not apply	12
No answer	3

Type of library

Academic library	108
Hospital library	50
Other	19
Not employed at this time	6
No answer	1

Age

30 or under	3
31–40	33
41–50	52
51–60	76
Over 60	19
No answer	1

academic librarians responded as hospital librarians. Respondents could select more than one library department, if appropriate. Individuals working in public services composed the largest group. The majority of respondents (70%) were in the 41-to-60 age group. Of the remaining 30%, only 2% were in the 30-and-under-30 group; 18% were in the 31-to-40 age group; and 10% were 60 years old or older. As expected, the largest percentage of respondents (91%) indicated a master's degree as the highest level of education completed. A doctorate was earned by 5%, and 4% had a bachelor's degree. Although some demographic information is available about SCC/MLA members, statistics regarding age and educational level are not. For this reason, the authors were not able to compare age and education between respondents and the membership.

Section I: mentoring

The purpose of this section was to learn what types of mentoring the chapter members considered important for their professional development and how important they were (Figure 2). The three that showed the strongest response were improvement of job performance through skills development, career development and growth, and fostering of academic achievements through research activities.

The respondents were asked to select characteristics of a formal mentoring relationship and to indicate the level of importance for each (Figure 3). The participants were also provided the opportunity to add other characteristics that they considered essential. The most important mentoring relationship selected by respondents was a deliberate, conscious, and voluntary one. This choice was very important or important for 170 participants in the study. The next characteristic in order of rank was a relationship expected to benefit all parties, followed by one involving individuals who are not in a direct hierarchical or supervisory chain-of-command. A relationship sanctioned or supported by the participants' institutions or organizations was ranked as least important by respondents.

The survey asked if having a mentor or mentors was a critical part of a person's professional experience. An overwhelming majority (71%) answered ''yes.'' The authors received a wealth of interesting and thoughtful comments to this question. One person said,

Figure 2
Types of mentoring the South Central Chapter of the Medical Library Association (SCC/MLA) members considered important for their professional development
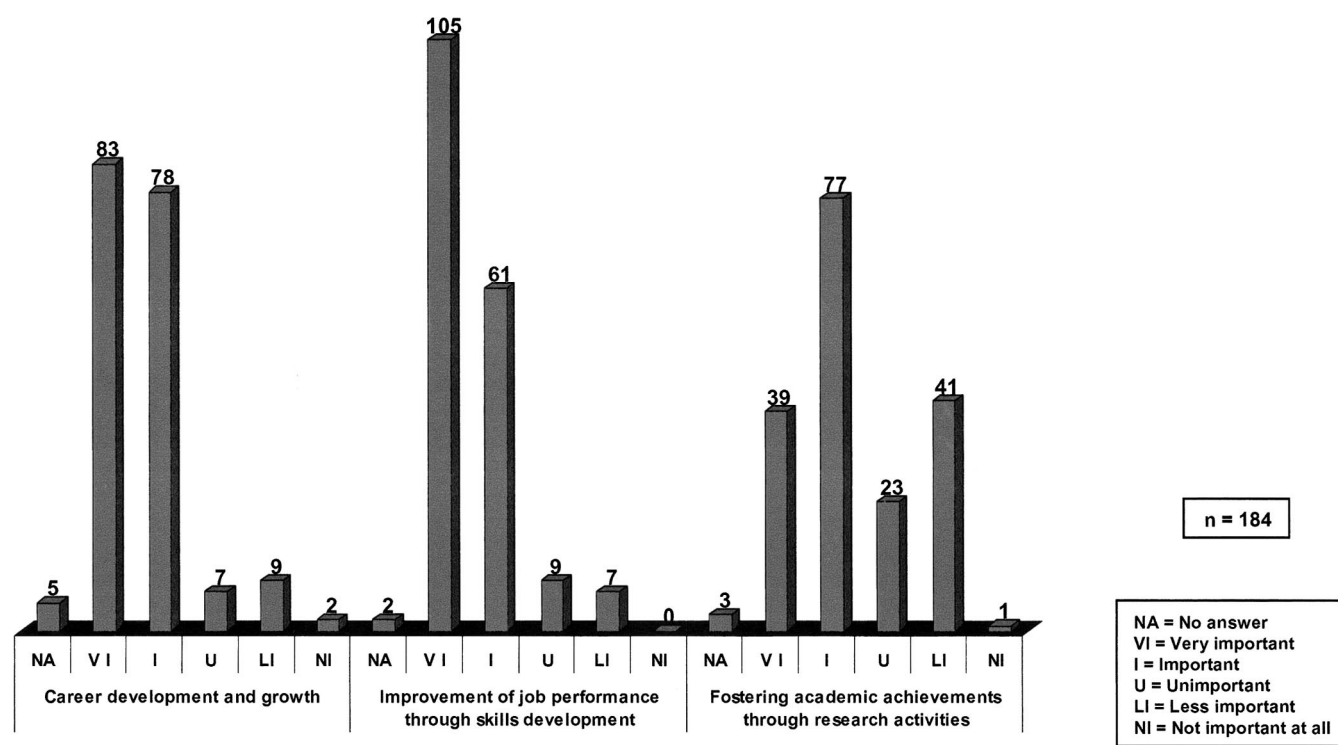
Especially during the early part of a career, I think it is important to have guidance and support for work activities, as well as in professional association activities. Sometimes it's hard to have confidence and feel like a vital part of a team in an organization, and that's how a mentor can be very valuable. (For additional comments, see Appendix B.)

Eighty-one percent of respondents had a mentor in their careers; 93% were either very satisfied or satisfied with the relationship. Eighty-five percent of those with 1 to 5 years of experience indicated that having a mentor was critical. For those with more than 20 years of experience, 75% stated it was critical. It was significant to see that both groups had a high percentage of favorable responses to this question. Another interesting fact learned through the survey was that 60% of the respondents had been a mentor, with 94% either very satisfied or satisfied with the relationship.

Section II: awareness of mentoring services

This section of the survey focused on awareness of mentoring services at the local, regional, and national levels. Only 12% of the respondents had a structured mentoring program at their institution; therefore, the findings from this question were limited. The most frequently selected response regarding components of mentoring programs at institutions was financial support, and the one chosen least often was a mentoring committee that coordinates all activities.
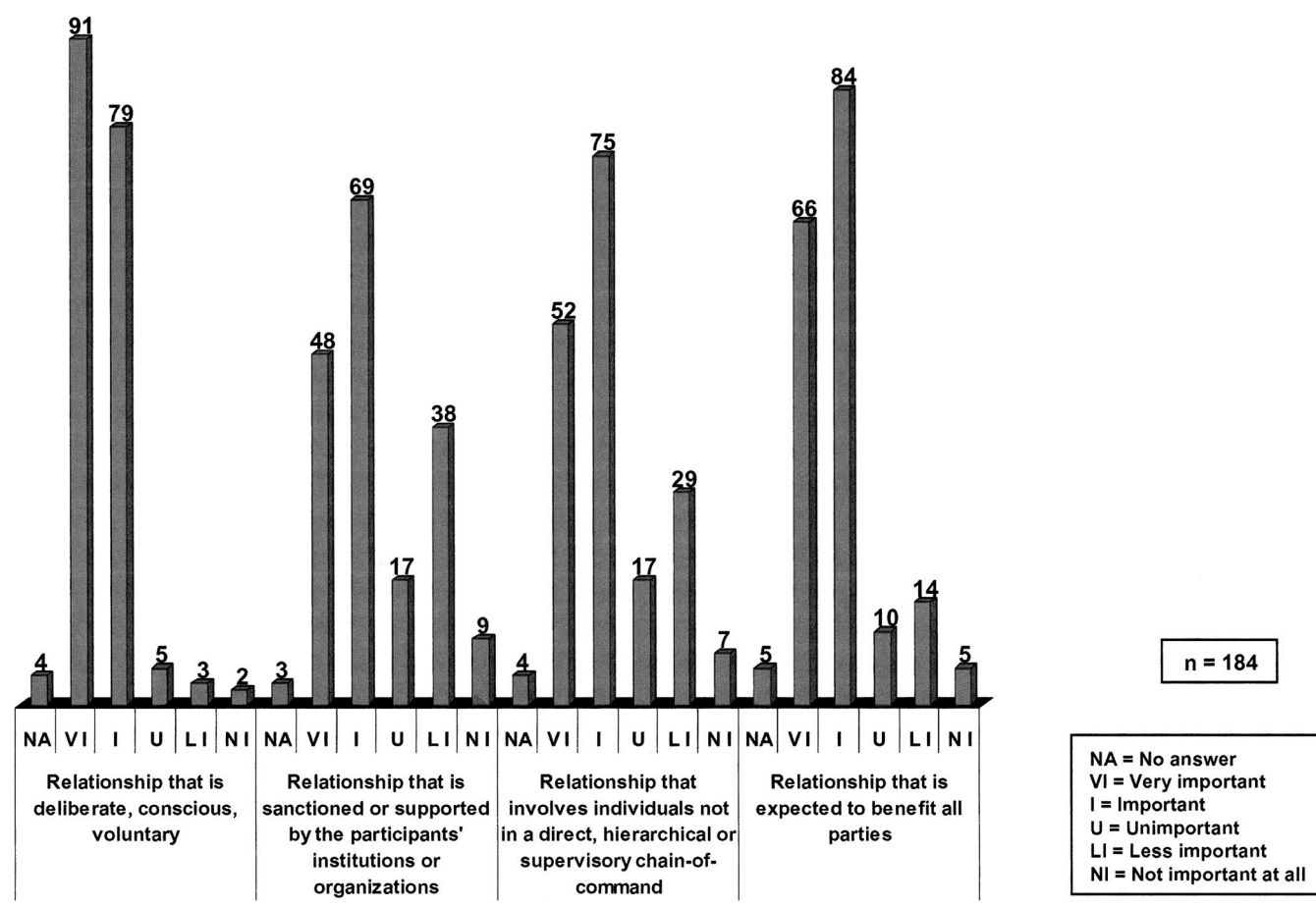
The next part of the survey focused on awareness of

and participation in SCC/MLA mentoring activities. Of the respondents, 107 (58%) knew of SCC/MLA mentoring activities. Of the 5 listed, the item with the least amount of participation was use of the SCC/MLA Research Committee's Website. Only 28 respondents selected it. Three activities had a similar level of participation (approximately 25%): promotion of the medical library profession and organizations through work with graduate schools of library and information sciences, provision of scholarships, and promotion of the Academy of Health Information Professionals (AHIP) program and provision of mentors through the Credentialing Committee. For those who participated in the SCC/MLA mentoring activities, the rate of satisfaction was high (50%–87%).

It was critical to the study to learn what mentoring services respondents recommended for SCC/MLA to improve the practice of librarianship (Figure 4). Twenty-three did not respond to the question. Fifteen respondents indicated that none were needed. From the listed items, 89 selected more Web-based mentoring resources on the SCC/MLA Website. Adding more Web-based resources was ranked as more important by hospital librarians than by academic librarians. The assumption could be made that Internet resources provide alternatives to in-person professional networking opportunities that are lacking in hospital libraries. Eighty-eight respondents recommended having a continuing education course at the annual meeting for

Figure 3
Characteristics of a formal mentoring relationship and the level of importance for each

NA	VI	I	U	LI	NI	NA	VI	I	U	LI	NI	NA	VI	I	U	LI	NI	NA	VI	I	U	LI	NI			

Relationship that is deliberate, conscious, voluntary	Relationship that is sanctioned or supported by the participants' institutions or organizations	Relationship that involves individuals not in a direct, hierarchical or supervisory chain-of-command	Relationship that is expected to benefit all parties

n = 184

NA = No answer
VI = Very important
I = Important
U = Unimportant
LI = Less important
NI = Not important at all

Figure 4
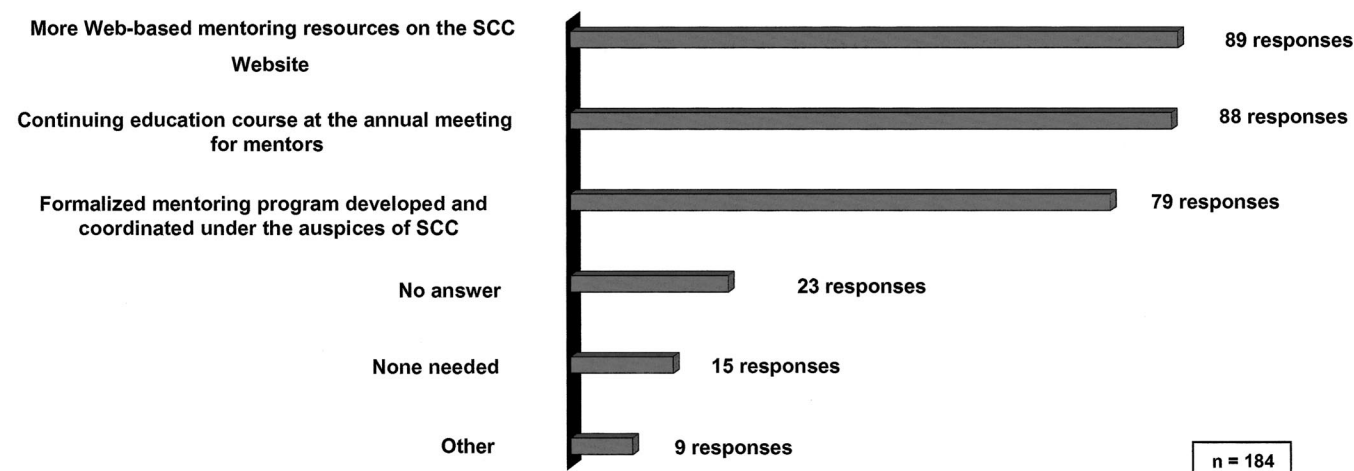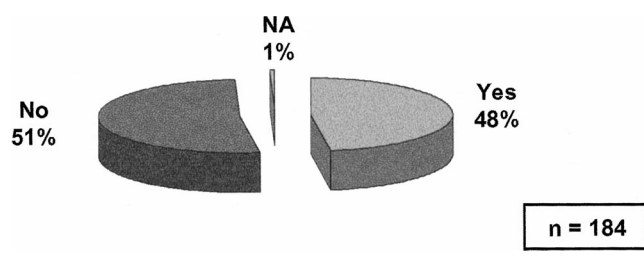Mentoring services recommended by respondents in SCC/MLA to improve the practice of librarianship

More Web-based mentoring resources on the SCC Website — 89 responses
Continuing education course at the annual meeting for mentors — 88 responses
Formalized mentoring program developed and coordinated under the auspices of SCC — 79 responses
No answer — 23 responses
None needed — 15 responses
Other — 9 responses

n = 184

Figure 5
Usage and awareness of the MLA Mentoring Website

NA
1%

No
51%

Yes
48%

n = 184

Figure 6
Usage of the MLA Mentoring Website

NA
1%

Yes
18%

No
81%

n = 184

mentors. Seventy-nine selected a formalized mentoring program developed and coordinated under the auspices of SCC/MLA. A formalized mentoring program was selected as important equally by academic librarians and hospital librarians. Within the two groups, 44% of respondents selected the formalized mentoring service. Nine other suggestions emphasized networking and communicating among members.

The final section of the survey measured the respondents' awareness and use of mentoring services at the national level through MLA (Figures 5 and 6). Only 48% were aware of the MLA Mentoring Website. At the confidence level of 95%, the proportion of all MLA members who are aware of the MLA Mentoring Website falls between 41% and 55%. Among the 18% who used the MLA Mentoring Website, the most frequently used sections were the mentoring guidelines, tip sheets, and Web resources for mentors. At the confidence level of 95%, the proportion of all MLA members who are using the MLA Mentoring Website falls between 13% and 23%. Of all the respondents, 178 (97%) had not used the Research Mentors Index <http://hubnet.buffalo.edu/mla/mindex.html> sponsored by the MLA Research Section.

The Academy of Health Information Professionals, a professional development and career recognition program of MLA, was the subject of another question in the survey. Respondents were asked about their participation in the MLA mentoring partnership, a requirement for those entering the academy at the Provisional level. Of the fourteen who responded "yes," 57% were satisfied with the relationship; 29% were not satisfied; and 14% did not answer the question.

Summary of important findings from the study

■ The mentoring activity chosen by respondents as the most important was the improvement of job performance through skills development.
■ Having a mentor or mentors was a critical part of the professional experience for most of the respondents.
■ The following mentoring services were chosen by respondents as the most important that SCC/MLA should provide:
(1) adding more Web-based resources,
(2) providing a formalized mentoring program in the region, and
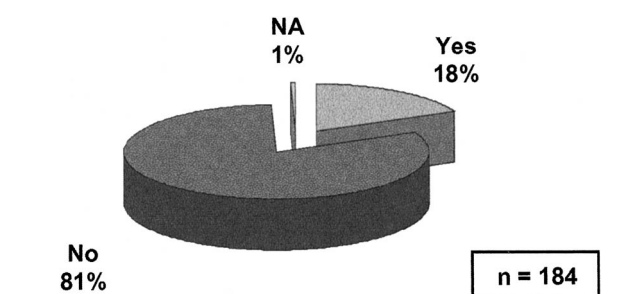
(3) offering a continuing education course for mentors.
■ Adding more Web-based resources ranked as more important by hospital librarians than academic librarians.
■ A formalized mentoring program was selected as important equally by academic librarians and hospital librarians.
■ SCC/MLA members were aware of mentoring activities in the region; however, participation levels in activities that the chapter provides need to be increased.
■ Awareness and use of the MLA Mentoring Website and resources were quite low.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the survey provide an overview of SCC/MLA members' awareness of mentoring at various levels, their satisfaction with existing services, and recommendations for expanding or improving mentoring services in the region. The small number of survey respondents in the thirty-and-under-thirty age group is disappointing. To obtain more valid data from this age group, additional studies are needed, such as focus group activities.

The rate of response and the wealth of comments provided by respondents document the high level of interest in mentoring by medical librarians in the SCC/MLA region. As expected, the study confirms the low number of formalized mentoring programs in the respondents' organizations or institutions. Such programs require a significant commitment on the part of an institution to develop, implement, and modify so that they remain a viable activity in a work setting. The professional literature documents the existence of such programs in larger academic environments [1, 2, 10]. A strong response supports developing formalized mentoring services at the regional level. The conclusion can be made that respondents viewed this choice as a solution to the lack of formalized mentoring programs in their work places.

The survey results and the library literature underscore the concept that no one perfect model supports all mentoring needs [3, 4, 11]. For some, a formal approach is needed; for others, access to relevant and timely information on a Website is appropriate. The

comments from the survey emphasize that "mentoring happens" for individuals who seize the opportunities and that these opportunities come in many forms.

Although the MLA Mentoring Program Task Force completed its work in 2001, mentoring efforts at the national level have entered another stage in late 2004. The Leadership and Management Section (LMS) of MLA formed the Task Force on Professional Development for Current and Aspiring Middle Managers. The charge to the task force states:

There is a demand for professional development for middle managers and aspiring middle managers that has not been met within MLA. There are numerous MLA initiatives in mentoring, continuing education, certification, and recruitment and retention, which despite their value do not address this issue specifically. LMS is convening this task force to explore the role LMS can play in addressing this issue for its members and the MLA membership at large. [12]

The section and association members look forward to the results of the task force's investigations and its proposals for effective solutions.

Whatever form mentoring takes at the local, regional, or national levels, ultimately individuals are responsible for mentoring themselves and others. As Plutchak mentions in a 2002 *Journal of the Medical Library Association* editorial,

It is your responsibility to seek out those who have ideas and experiences that you think you can learn from, no matter how long you have been in the profession and how much you think you know. It is equally, and perhaps even more importantly, your responsibility to share what you can with those around you. Do it in your workplace, do it at local, regional, and national meetings. Do it by email, on discussion lists, and in the pages of our professional journals. [13]

Mentoring will always remain part of the fundamental values in the library profession. At times, the issue receives significant support and attention; at other times, the importance is acknowledged, but other initiatives or concerns receive greater emphasis. Support for mentoring activities at the regional and national levels will continue to evolve as the profession and needs of its members change.

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APPENDIX A

Mentoring services survey*

Section I: mentoring

1. What types of mentoring do you consider important for your professional development?

Types of mentoring	Very important	Important	Undecided	Less important	Not important at all
Career development and growth (e.g., analysis of goals, expectations, role responsibilities, realizing your potential and strengths)					
Improvement of job performance through skills development (e.g., updates on database searching, creating a Website, instruction in productivity software, efficient use of time, networking and contacts, evaluation)					

Fostering academic achievements through re-
search activities (e.g., research support meth-
odology, data gathering, analysis, conclusions,
writing report on results, publishing)

2. Listed below are some of the characteristics of a formal mentoring relationship. Please indicate the level of importance to
you for each, and add any others you consider important.

Characteristics	Very important	Important	Undecided	Less important	Not important at all
Relationship that is deliberate, conscious, volun-tary					
Relationship that is sanctioned or supported by the participants' institutions or organizations					
Relationship that involves individuals not in a direct, hierarchical, or supervisory chain-of-command					
Relationship that is expected to benefit all par-ties					
Others (please specify):					

3(a). Have you had a mentor or mentors in your career (whether in a formal program or not)?
_____ Yes   _____ No

3(b). If yes, indicate your level of satisfaction with the relationship.
_____ Very satisfied   _____ Satisfied   _____ Undecided   _____ Dissatisfied   _____ Very dissatisfied

4(a). Have you been a mentor (whether in a formal program or not)?
_____ Yes   _____ No

4(b). If yes, indicate your level of satisfaction with the relationship.
_____ Very satisfied   _____ Satisfied   _____ Undecided   _____ Dissatisfied   _____ Very dissatisfied

5(a). Do you consider having a mentor or mentors a critical part of your professional experience?
_____ Yes   _____ No

5(b). If yes, please explain why. _____

Section II: awareness of mentoring services

A. Institutional or organizational level:

1(a). Is there a structured mentoring program at your institution or organization?
_____ Yes   _____ No

1(b). If yes, what are the components of the mentoring program and your satisfaction with each?

Yes	No	Components	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
		Mentoring committee that coordinates all activi-ties					
		Workshops to assist in building mentoring rela-tionships for participants in the mentoring program					
		Periodic evaluations and revisions of mentoring program					
		Financial support by the institution or organiza-tion for professional development activities					
		Others (please specify):					

B. Regional level:

1(a). Are you aware of South Central Chapter's (SCC's) mentoring activities?
_____ Yes   _____ No

1(b). If yes, please indicate the ones in which you have participated and your satisfaction with each.

Yes	No	SCC mentoring activities	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
___	___	Promotion of Academy of Health Information Professionals program and provision of mentors through the Credentialing Committee	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	Provision of scholarships (Mayo Drake, William D. Postell Sr.)	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	Promotion of the medical library profession and organizations through work with graduate schools of library and information sciences	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	Participation in mentoring programs at SCC Annual Meetings	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	Usage of resources provided by the SCC Research Committee Website	___	___	___	___	___

2. In your opinion, what mentoring services (if any) are needed in SCC? Please select all that you recommend.

    _____ Formalized mentoring program developed and coordinated under the auspices of SCC

    _____ More Web-based mentoring resources on the SCC Website

    _____ Continuing education course at annual meeting for mentors

    _____ Others (please specify): _____

    _____ None needed

C. National level

1. Are you aware of the Medical Library Association's (MLA's) Mentoring Website?

    _____ Yes   _____ No

2(a). Have you used the MLA Mentoring Website?

    _____ Yes   _____ No

2(b). If yes, please indicate which of these sections were used and your satisfaction with each.

Yes	No	Activities	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
___	___	Become an MLA mentor	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	Find a mentor online	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	Mentor guidelines and tip sheets (all or some)	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	Print resources for mentors	___	___	___	___	___
___	___	Web resources for mentors	___	___	___	___	___

3. Have you used the MLA Research Mentoring Service (Research Mentor Index) sponsored by the MLA Research Section?

    _____ Yes   _____ No

4(a). Did you enter the Academy of Health Information Professionals at the Provisional level (for which a mentoring partnership was required)?

    _____ Yes   _____ No

4(b). If yes, were you satisfied with the mentoring relationship?

    _____ Yes   _____ No

Section III: information about respondent

1. What is your gender?

    _____ Male   _____ Female

2. What is your age?

    _____ 30 or under 30   _____ 31–40   _____ 41–50   _____ 51–60   _____ Over 60

3. Please indicate your highest level of education completed:

    _____ High school   _____ Associate's degree   _____ Bachelor's degree   _____ Master's degree

    _____ Doctorate

4. If employed, in what state do you work?

    _____ Arkansas   _____ Louisiana   _____ New Mexico   _____ Oklahoma   _____ Texas   _____ Other

5. In what type of library or organization do you work?

_____ Academic library

_____ Hospital library

_____ Other (please specify): _____

_____ Not employed at this time

6. In what type of library department do you work? Select all that apply.

_____ Public services (reference, bibliographic instruction, circulation, interlibrary loan, etc.)

_____ Technical services (acquisitions, cataloging, systems, etc.)

_____ Library administration

_____ Other (please specify): _____

_____ Does not apply

7. What are your years of experience in the library profession?

_____ 1–5 years   _____ 6–10 years   11–15 years   _____ 16–20 years   _____ Over 20 years

Section IV: if you would like to provide any additional comments, please use the space on the other side of this page.

Return completed survey in the enclosed addressed envelope to: Pauline Fulda and Hanna Kwasik, Library, Louisiana University Health Sciences Center, 433 Bolivar Street, New Orleans, LA 70112.

*This research activity is supported by a SCAMeL Research Grant. This survey has been approved by the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX B

Selected comments

■ ''Library school misses much. Mentoring fills in my gaps.''

■ ''My mentors have been outside my institution because my institution has no interest in any of our careers long-term.''

■ ''People can have a successful and rewarding experience as a professional librarian without a mentor. However, people can be even more successful with one!''

■ Mentoring is helpful ''particularly in the hospital setting, when the librarian may be working alone.''

■ A mentoring ''relationship brings many rewards to both mentor and mentee.''

■ ''Mostly they kept me out of trouble! Seriously— they encouraged me to strive for things that I would not have ever considered on my own.''

■ ''Experience of mentors is very valuable information for the future. I have mentors who probably do not realize how influential they are. Leadership behavior and skills are important to me.''

■ ''Being the only person with my job at my institution, I feel lonely sometimes. I depend on more experienced colleagues for encouragement and ideas.''

■ ''I do not believe in formal mentoring programs. It should be a voluntary association between individuals who find each other. . . .I do believe that a formalized mentoring process should not be in conjunction with credentialing programs that have associated costs, as that, for me, crosses the ethical line. It requires the protégé to pay to participate to receive the mentoring and/or to participate in a credentialing process in order to get mentoring. It also places restrictions on who can participate in mentoring programs, both as the mentor and the protégé, if it is necessary to participate

in the credentialing process in order to participate in the mentoring program.''

■ ''I think mentoring happens more frequently than not when opportunities present themselves and the mentor takes action. I think it would be more difficult to mentor someone at a distance than if one had regular contact. I gained more from an informal mentor at my institution with whom I had regular contact than the provisional AHIP mentor. This isn't a criticism—it's just reality, and regular contact provides more opportunities to mentor.''

■ ''When you mentor. . . you learn so much!''

■ Mentors ''were able to teach me more about the profession than I learned during my formal education.''

■ ''Level of experience of the mentor during my first years in the profession was critical to my success.''

■ ''Guide and support [of a mentor] was critical in first years of profession.''

■ ''I think that mentoring would be a good idea, but I question how effectively it could be done between geographically dispersed people.''

■ ''Mentoring enabled me to go in directions I would have never gone, [and] to be confident when taking risks rather than cautious, and to have new experiences giving me a broader base. I have also had bad mentors whose advice would have destroyed me. Even with mentors, you need to use your own wisdom and discernment.''

■ Mentors ''helped me apply what I learned in graduate school. [They] increased my confidence level.''

■ ''My cataloging professor in library school gave me great support in the early days of my career. It was not formal in any way. I needed mentoring the most when I entered the research arena, but there was none available.''

■ ''I have mentored others in situations where I was mentoring them in research methods on research top-

ics of mutual interest. These kinds of self-selected relationships are superior to organizationally sanctioned programs.''

- ''This is the key method for ensuring professional development and promoting growth.''
- ''Mentors-mentoring is a lifelong learned/teaching process. As [a] beginner, the idea and use of a mentor from the library field was important—formal or informal. Now—20 years plus into the profession, mentors outside the library field—experts in content/administration/PR/HR, etc.—are more important. I go outside to consultants and [a] variety of other places for help.''